



MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN

BULLETIN: 11-01

Date: October 31, 2001

SUBJECT: Maritime Security

Fellow members of the Long Island and Connecticut Maritime Community:

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of you for your marvelous response and cooperation with us over the last month and a half. The purpose of this correspondence is to address and respond to questions raised concerning some of the actions the Coast Guard has been required to take recently and the inevitable desire to return to "normal" operating conditions.

As you are aware, since 11 September the Coast Guard, in a dramatic shift of operational emphasis, has been involved in the largest port security/maritime homeland security operation since World War II. The following categories can help define the additional Coast Guard maritime homeland security activities in that regard: intelligence and information; command and control; interdiction; port control; port inspection; and asset/infrastructure protection. In order to achieve a maritime security environment that effectively differentiates between lawful and unlawful activities, the U.S. must have an *awareness* of all vessels operating to and from U.S. ports, as well as of those transiting our coastal waters. The heart of this "maritime domain awareness" is adequate information, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance of all vessels, cargos, and people well outside our traditional maritime boundaries. Establishing effective, *positive control* of maritime traffic is key to this concern. Part of the difficulty, however, in establishing effective port control is that we do not currently have adequate sensors or systems in place to provide a complete surface operational picture at most strategic ports around the country. Absent this technical capability and until such time as those systems can be put in place, additional operational requirements and maritime controls have to be implemented.

Locally this shift in mission emphasis has and will continue to shape and dictate our Captain of the Port Long Island Sound maritime policies and controls, not to mention the focus of our resource allocations as we strive to manage the *unique* maritime security challenges of the maritime transportation system in our area. It has been plainly evident that our awareness, prevention and response efforts in a comprehensive "vulnerability" assessment approach to maritime homeland security will not be easy, painless or cost free. Also, as the highest levels of the federal government have repeatedly maintained, we cannot expect to receive specific and credible warnings or indicators in time to discreetly apply security forces to targeted, highly vulnerable port/harbor areas or specific locations or sites. We therefore must seek to aggressively minimize the vulnerabilities of our critical maritime approaches, coastal zone and port/harbor areas through a broad but balanced approach.

Reducing vulnerability in these maritime areas will require a joint and sustained effort by facility and vessel owners/operators, the Coast Guard, the States of New York and Connecticut, other federal and local law enforcement agencies, and also a significant enhancement in both government and private maritime security forces/capabilities. In the interim, while these new maritime security forces/capabilities are being designed, developed, and implemented, significant gaps in maritime security readiness remain. Application of existing resources to these gaps must be prioritized and continually balanced by thorough and judicious risk assessment. An essential and imperative need for

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“operations security” also complicates the activation of our best maritime homeland security measures. In the current operating environment, public disclosure or discussion of specific plans, capabilities, tactics, and limitations is neither productive nor prudent. The maritime industry and the American public can rest assured that the limited number of Coast Guard personnel, vessels, aircraft and small boats available will be effectively and efficiently employed, in concert with state, local and industry efforts, to maximize maritime homeland security service. I must emphasize that our maritime homeland security efforts are essentially a military operation in response to an act of war, here at home, and many of our measures must remain confidential for the safety of all concerned. This factor may also necessarily limit information sharing and partnering with industry and commercial entities in the development of specific strategies and tactics, and the actual conduct of some of our operations. In addition, given current resource limitations, some other traditional Coast Guard missions such as fisheries enforcement and counter-drug patrols may be affected in the short-term and receive less attention. In the end, our overarching goal will continue to be the provision of the highest level of protection possible to all those interests that best serve our country.

With specific regard to the Long Island Sound area of operations and our maritime security controls on night time foreign vessel transits: for the time being, in the interests of maintaining our essential positive control of foreign vessel traffic in/outbound the eastern end of Long Island Sound and given the proximity of the national security port of New London, its national defense assets, and the nuclear power plant nearby, these restrictions will have to be continued. In fact, based on Attorney General Ashcroft's announcement late Monday afternoon (29 OCT 01) of an imminent "general threat" of further terrorist attacks against United States' interests, and the State of Connecticut's concomitant re-establishment of increased security at Millstone and elsewhere throughout the state that evening, more restrictive and burdensome security measures could be called for in the near future. Nonetheless, as has been the case since 11 September, the Coast Guard will continually assess and modify our actions and measures and will continue to work closely with state, local and maritime industry partners as best we can to provide the most effective maritime port security possible.

The situation we all find ourselves in is dynamic, challenging and unprecedented and we all are being called upon to sacrifice and to be flexible, patient, and vigilant for the indefinite future. The Coast Guard's raison d'être has always been centered on safety and security. I look forward to the Long Island and Connecticut maritime community working patriotically with us to sustain the flow of maritime commerce throughout the area while protecting all the vital and diverse components of the maritime transportation system.

Anyone who witnesses suspicious activity should notify us immediately at (203) 468-4401. For public affairs matters contact Lieutenant (junior grade) Pam Garcia at (203) 468-4429.

J. J. Coccia
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port
Long Island Sound